

## State of the City Address

Mayor Snarr

January 22, 2013

Good Evening. Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight.

Each year for the past 15 years I have had the opportunity to provide an address to you focusing upon the State of the City. As I reflect back on the past years and realize that this will be the last speech of this type I will give, there are many events that have changed the face of our City that I wanted to mention tonight. Please join me on the journey we have taken over the years.

In 1998, my speech was given as a newly elected Mayor, full of ideas and optimism at what the next four years would bring. By 1999, with a year under my belt, things were progressing at a rapid pace. Former Mayor Lynn Pett had spent much of his administration working to clean up the smelter site with two chimneys that had been quiet for 50 years and needed to be removed. We signed the consent decree with the EPA to take them down and begin preparations for Chimney Ridge, a large retail development to be built on the site.

1999 was also the birth of our Murray Municipal Justice Court. Changes in the District Court left the option for cities to have justice courts and we began holding the court in the City Council Chambers for traffic offenses and small claims.

An opportunity was provided by Salt Lake County to host paramedics in our City and we found a home for them in Station 81. I was excited to provide this important service to our residents with faster response times for emergencies.

2000 became a year of **ups and downs**. The chimneys came **down** on August 6<sup>th</sup> in perfect fashion, but not without protests. Many facilities opened in the City during this year providing the **upside**. Three new light rail stations became operational in Murray with an opportunity to test them prior to the Salt Lake Olympic Games in 2002. The new outdoor Murray Aquatics Center was open with a hydro-tube for added fun. Cooperation with the Murray School District led to opening the Kennecott Nature Center along the Jordan River Parkway. Salt Lake County reconfigured the old fairground with new sports fields and opened an Ice Center by Murray Park for an Olympic practice facility and public use. We put flowers in the planters on State Street and survived Y2K.

2001 the focus was on “Murray City – The Best City in America.” While we may not use this slogan as much today, in my mind, it will always be true. The face of Murray began another transition in 2001. Construction began on the Point at 53<sup>rd</sup> and Intermountain Health Care purchased the smelter site from the Chimney Ridge developers. They agreed to keep a portion of the site commercial and leased it to COSTCO. The RDA provided funds for a nice facelift for downtown Murray. Day Murray Music, Murray Theater and the Desert Star Playhouse all received help for improvements, along with sidewalks, benches and trees.

Murray City Power began building a natural gas turbine generation project at the cost of \$22 million dollars. The turbines will provide peaking load power and can be started to meet the necessary demand.

There were many exciting events that took place in 2002. We had a part in welcoming the world to celebrate the 2002 Winter Olympics as athletes practiced in the Ice Center in Murray Park. The Park Center, a recreation and exercise facility, opened and included a lap pool that was partially funded by the Murray School District to become the home of the Spartan swimmers. A decision was made to improve telecommunications for the residents by joining a network of cities in creating UTOPIA to build fiber optics to the homes and businesses in the City.

Willow Pond Park was completed on the west side of the City as a 32 acre facility complete with dancing waters and an urban fishery. We had been working to add another north/south access through the City and the \$16 million dollar Cottonwood Street Overpass created the first leg of this effort. Federal funding was obtained to cover 80% of this great project.

Our City grew in a big way during 2002. Several annexations were undertaken by the residents of the unincorporated county and 12,000 more people became Murray citizens. Having this addition brought new challenges and new energy as we began our second century.

2003 was a celebration year for us as we marked Murray City’s Centennial. I enjoyed the opportunity to play C.L. Miller, the first Mayor of Murray, and repeat his message as part of this anniversary. This was an opportunity to reflect on the great heritage our forefathers left for us to enjoy.

Costco opened in February, with beautiful landscaping and a prime location. They have been good community partners and we appreciate all the ways they add value to our City.

Across the street, Murray High School was rebuilt and opened for the students. It is a beautiful school that creates great pride in the community.

We started 2004 on a cold note as a five day power outage impacted our new residents in east Murray. Our Murray Power customers only had a few hours of discomfort, but with the concerns for other residents, we recognized the importance of a well maintained infrastructure in our power company.

After years of effort, curbside recycling finally was made available to the residents of the City. We also completed the Jordan River Parkway trail underpass under 6400 south, adding another safer option for users of the trail.

A Commission on Public Safety was put in place to help us consider ways we could prepare for any type of emergency situation. With some of our concerns for the age of our City Hall, we considered the needs for future buildings, especially with our first responders in mind. While we haven't been able to move the police department from this building yet, we continue to get closer to making a new City Hall a reality.

2005 was a year to plan. We completed plans for future infrastructure, with a focus on improving our roads. A housing plan was undertaken to look for ways to keep people in their homes and provide housing options for all income levels. A staffing plan for our public safety, both police and fire, was created.

Murray Park had the addition of a new rose garden in 2006. Former City Council Member Dick Stauffer spent endless hours researching rose varieties and tending this beautiful garden added to Constitution Circle. The rose garden is a lovely memorial to all those who served our country in the armed forces.

Fiber optic cable is put in place in 60% of our City by 2006. It provides opportunities for amazing internet speed and is a sought after resource by both businesses and residents. Murray Power added a new resource to their portfolio with the addition of a landfill gas facility at the Salt Lake County landfill. This environmentally sensitive resource adds more diversity and options for providing power to our residents.

Murray Fire Department celebrated their centennial this year. We had a great time enjoying this milestone with a variety of activities and realizing how fortunate we are to have this wonderful group of public servants ready to help in difficult situations.

2007 brought new neighbors on the former smelter site as the Intermountain Medical Center began opening seven new hospitals, one by one. Cottonwood Hospital closed some of its buildings as patients were transferred and the new Intermountain Medical Center became operational.

Murray Power completed upgrading the power system to 138kv, which added capacity and improved reliability for the future. We also instituted a City Utility Relief Program for the very low income who needed a bridge to keep their utilities available, especially during the winter months. This program continues today and helps fill an important gap for those in need.

We made national news in 2008 with our native son, David Archuleta, becoming a finalist on the popular American Idol program. Murray City had a celebration to show the world David's hometown and provide our support to him in his quest.

Improvements were made to Ken Price Ball Park this summer to prepare it for another national spotlight the next year. Beautiful landscaping was added and fiber made available to allow visitors to connect to the internet while watching ball games.

After studying the best way to provide emergency services to east Murray, we determined that two new fire stations were needed. Station 82 was built on Vine Street and 1000 East and completed this year.

In 2009 as Intermountain Medical Center completed the campus, a memorial Chimney Garden was put in place to commemorate the history of the smelter industry.

Fire Station 83 was finished in 2009 with an Emergency Operations Center built as part of it. The former station 83 became a facility to hold our Special Operations Unit for the Police. Station 84 became the home to Murray City paramedics who took over this responsibility from the County. Over 125 City employees completed the CERT program, which focuses on being prepared to help in emergencies.

A grant from the Federal Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided the opportunity to complete a second landfill gas resource project at TransJordan Landfill. The power generated is sold to another entity which helps cover the costs of other power resources we use every day.

Murray City was again in the national spotlight in 2010 as we hosted the 13 year old Babe Ruth World Series. Volunteers from the community hosted players, helped with logistics and welcomed teams from around the country.

We participated in the national "America in Bloom" competition this year. Our residents got involved in making improvements and enjoyed showing the national judges the great things about Murray. We were an award winner, but I especially loved seeing people take pride in their yards to make the City a more attractive place to live.

Just before the judges came to see our City, we had a huge flooding problem from the Big and Little Cottonwood Creeks. City crews worked endlessly, volunteers helped fill and place sandbags, and then returned to clean up when the water subsided.

We also created a partnership with NeighborWorks of Salt Lake City and opened a facility on Poplar Street. Their role is to help residents with housing concerns and use our Community Development Block Grant funding to benefit them, too.

2011 brought new stores to Fashion Place Mall with over 92,000 square feet of retail and restaurants. The Fireclay area is being built as a Transit Oriented Development and is successfully redeveloping this under-utilized corner of the City. The Heritage Senior Center volunteers worked hard at fund raising and were able to build a new entrance to provide a safe drop off location for our seniors.

We completed a great Strategic Planning process with the help of the Novak Consulting group. Murray City has a good direction and goals in place to help us continue our success. There is now a Capital Improvement Planning process to help us outline and accomplish projects in an organized fashion.

The State of the City report usually focuses upon the current year. 2012 was a year with many accomplishments. Each of our Departments worked on a variety of initiatives to make life better for our residents.

Public Services oversaw the completion of the bridge rebuild over Big Cottonwood Creek at Main Street. After our success in hosting the Babe Ruth World Series previously, we were invited to host this event again, this time with 14 year olds. The second time was also a wonderful community event. The Park Center celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. Our crews spent almost 1000 hours cleaning up graffiti around the City, which continues to be a concern. Since the gravesites have all been sold at the Murray Cemetery, we added a new niche this year. One of our great water resources, McGhie Springs, was successfully rehabilitated and we are enjoying improved water flow.

The Police Department moved to the UCAN response system this year, with mobile radios being added to upgrade for compatibility. Seven officers were hired this year to replace officers who moved to other jobs.

We have a new Finance Director, Justin Zollinger, who has brought a huge array of talent to this position. He and his staff produced the annual financial statements for the audit this year, rather than relying on the auditors for this work.

Murray Fire led the City in participating in the Great ShakeOut Drill in April. This was a statewide project that helped everyone focus on emergency preparedness in the event of an earthquake. The Fire Department took the 1991 pumper truck to Wisconsin for an engine refurbishing which was more cost-effective than purchasing a new truck.

The Administrative and Development Services Department oversaw a wide variety of activities. Several automobile dealerships were rebuilt and the old ones sold to new dealers. They worked to oversee the continued building at the Fireclay Transit Oriented Development, with many new residents moving there. Our IT Division replaced 70 computers this year and converted our email system to Microsoft Outlook. The Recorder's Office completed the Records and Information Policies and Procedures to assist in improved records management.

The Power Department closed the year with reserves close to \$13 million dollars. The Forestry Division worked on about 4650 trees this year and helped us receive the 35<sup>th</sup> consecutive "Tree City, USA" designation.

Murray Library celebrated their centennial this year. Four new art glass panels were commissioned by the Library Board and are ready for installation. Kim Fong was hired as the new Library director after Dan Barr's retirement. 570,000 items were checked out this year by patrons.

The Attorney's Office handled a variety of contentious litigation during the year. They worked on many development agreements and dealt with insurance claims along with Worker's Compensation issues successfully.

With an improving financial picture, our Human Resources Department completed the Wasatch Compensation Survey for the first time since 2008. This effort will help us focus on the needs of our employees to stay competitive in the future. The City Wellness Committee encouraged employees to take advantage of Healthy Utah screening with good success this year.

Murray City Court took the responsibility to cover fingerprinting ordered by the Court. This was previously done by the Murray Police Department. This year 773 sets of prints were taken by our trained Court personnel. The court will be adjusting their hours this month to better accommodate the public by opening at 7:30 a.m. and closing at 5:30 p.m.

Going through all these accomplishments gives me a great sense of peace. I realize these things have not been done due to the effort of just one person. Council members through the years have supported these programs and initiatives. The Department Heads have worked tirelessly and are a fabulous resource to our residents. We have the best employees possible. I admire and respect them for their dedication and hard work. When things get accomplished in the City, it is because of our experts who make them happen.

I would like to express my appreciation for the support of our great Murray residents through the years. It has been my pleasure to meet them and learn from them. I would also like to thank my family, especially my wife, April, for their support through the years.

I love this City. Regardless of where I am and what the future holds for me, my heart belongs to  
“Murray City – The Best City in America.”

Thank you and good night.